



Lesotho

MCC Learning from

“MCC – Lesotho Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Activity”

NORC, January 2018

MCC has identified the following programmatic and evaluation lessons based on the MCC – Lesotho Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Activity

PROGRAMMATIC LESSONS

- *Ensure the efficiency of MCC investments.* The ex-ante cost-benefit analysis of this Activity estimated that costs exceeded benefits, and the evaluation supported this expectation, finding relatively small impacts on time saving and no impacts on water-borne illness. These analyses suggest that there were likely more efficient uses for MCC’s funding. Adhering to MCC’s recently-adopted investment criteria should help ensure the efficiency of MCC investments going forward. In addition, during project design, teams can use early economic analysis to establish a cap for the cost of a project given the benefits that can be expected and work to ensure the project investment does not exceed that cost ceiling without a commensurate increase in expected benefits.
- *Improve coordination between various program components to achieve results.* MCC funded the construction works under the Rural Water activity while DRWS led the complementary hygiene and sanitation training with little coordination from MCA. As a result, perhaps, the training preceded construction by years in some cases and 73% of the aftercare trainings still had not been completed as of June 2016. Given the importance of these trainings to the overall logic and results of the intervention, MCC and MCA should have played a larger role in developing the content, overseeing implementation, and ensuring coordination with construction work.

EVALUATION LESSONS

- *Improve coordination between intervention and evaluation to learn what works.* Although the trainings were intended to contribute to results, we cannot test the impact of them directly since they were not factored into the evaluation design. In addition, because many of the trainings preceded baseline data collection, we do not have a true baseline for those outcomes. Better planning and coordination could have created greater opportunities for learning.
- *Test key assumptions.* DRWS provided hygiene and sanitation training to communities to encourage good hygiene behaviors and provide information about the new sanitation facilities. While the household survey investigated hygiene behaviors, the evaluation did not test water samples to assess the quality at the point of source or point of consumption.



As such, we are not able to test the critical assumptions that the new water sources do in fact result in increased consumption of higher quality water and that households are not inadvertently contaminating water after collecting it.

- *Rigorously plan for and monitor data quality.* Among the biggest challenges to this evaluation were those related to data collection and processing. The Lesotho Bureau of Statistics, which conducted the surveys, deviated from the data collection plan during both rounds of data collection, which impacted both data quality and the sample size. The following solutions might have helped with these problems: aligning incentives of the survey firm and MCC/MCA/the evaluator; technological solutions such as electronic data collection, which allows for real-time monitoring of progress, fidelity to the sample design, and data quality; and ensuring the evaluator had sufficient and continued oversight of survey operations throughout the field period to safeguard data quality.
- *Be cautious when pursuing randomized rollout designs.* The Lesotho Compact attempted two randomized rollout evaluation designs and both suffered delays that threatened their internal validity and compromised their statistical power. Ultimately, the Rural Water evaluation was preserved, while the Health evaluation was not. This challenge is not unique to Lesotho. Given MCC's five-year implementation timelines, the time taken to prepare for implementation, and the realities that often occur on the ground, completing one phase of implementation and ensuring a sufficient lag before the beginning of another phase, can be very difficult and should be considered carefully and commitment of relevant parties secured before investing significant resources in this type of design.

Evaluation Brief: <https://www.mcc.gov/resources/doc/evalbrief-092017-lesotho-rural-water>